

March 13, 2004

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been a very grateful participant in the Nurturing Families Network (NFN) Program for the two years since my daughter Lillian was born. As a first time parent and single mom with no family nearby to rely on, I real was a nervous wreck about how to care for a newborn and what to expect from this huge life change. The support I receive from NFN is amazing. Shamia Henderson has been my home visitors and always eases my worries, offers terrific advice and resources and also helps me prepare for each new developmental stage. Maria Zayas, Shamia's supervisor, joins some visits and loves them both and appreciates the books, clothing, and toys they bring from donations they receive. Every child is unique and each parent has different needs. Shamia and NFN tailor activities during our home visits esp. for me + Lilli, and Shamia is always responsive + avail. between visits when challenges come up or I just need a pep talk. NFN also offers parenting groups which I have found to be very helpful in connecting with other new moms. In my opinion both new and even experienced moms can benefit from the kind of programs + support NFN has.

NFN should continue to operate under Childrens Trust Fund - or be expanded since preventive services are even more critical during these stressful times. I am firmly against moving NFN to DCF. I would not have been so open to getting involved if they were associated w/ DCF - most parents fear DCF involvement of any kind and this perception would turn a lot of people away. I also don't think DCF could do nearly as good a job with the kind of services as NFN and CTF have already established and run beautifully.

Please feel free to contact me for any questions or other comments.

Sincerely,

Jennifer R. Henry